# GPO

**THE HONORABLE HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN**
*Director*
*United States Government Publishing Office*

# Prepared Statement before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Committee on Appropriations U.S. House of Representatives

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# United States Government Publishing Office FY 2024 Budget Hearing

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HT-2, The Capitol

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am honored to appear before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations to present the Government Publishing Office's (GPO's) fiscal year 2024 appropriations request. I thank you and your staff for your past support of GPO and I look forward to working closely with you during my time as Director. For the coming fiscal year, I am requesting appropriations in the amount of $132,488,000, an increase of $2,634,000 over our FY 2023 appropriation.

This marks just the third time in a decade that GPO has requested an increase in appropriated funds and incorporates increased costs in labor and materials, while accommodating certain initiatives of importance to Congress and the rest of the legislative branch. Our FY 2024 request represents a two percent increase over FY 2023, less than a third of the increase in the consumer price index during calendar year 2022. It is also 10.2 percent lower than the Agency's all-time high appropriation of $147.5 million in FY 2010.

GPO runs as a business enterprise and appropriated funds represent a comparatively small portion of GPO's overall revenue and operating capital. Over 88 percent of GPO's FY 2022 revenue came from billings of its other Federal customers, including the State Department, the courts, the Department of Defense, and many others. For FY 2024, we estimate that direct appropriations may be an even smaller portion of our overall budget (*See figure 1*). And just as we occasionally need to adjust the rates we charge our other customers, we also need to request adjustments to our appropriation levels to ensure that we are meeting our statutory obligation to recover our costs and provide for investments that will yield additional efficiency and capability.

*Figure 1*



**11%** **Direct appropriations to GPO as a proportion of FY24 estimated total budget**
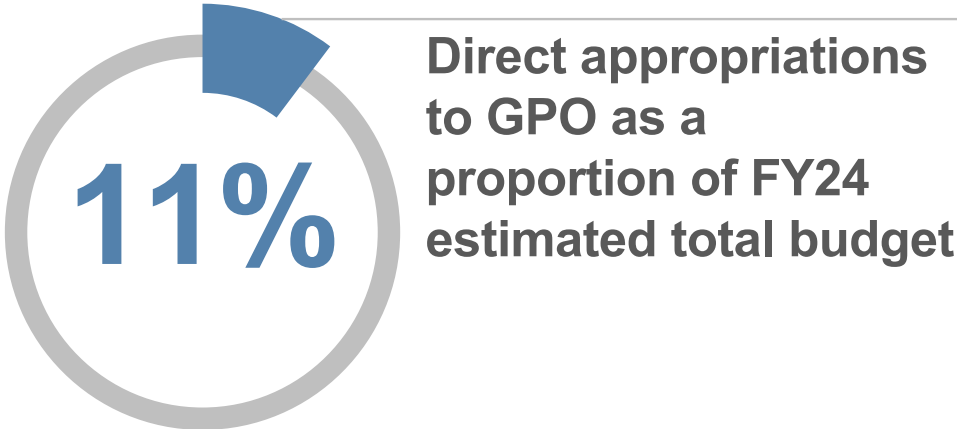
## Charting a Course for the Future in FY 2022

At GPO, fiscal year 2022 was one of significant accomplishment and encouraging progress.

Perhaps our most significant achievement in FY 2022 was closing out our books with a net positive income for the 2nd straight year, after a challenging 2020. All told, we had a net positive income of $26.2 million in FY 2022 and marked the first time in five years in which GPO added employees.

**Prepared Statement Before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, on U.S. GPO's FY 2024 Budget**

1

We are also proud that our hard work at modernizing and efforts to build a dynamic and welcoming workplace are starting to attract attention. Forbes Magazine recently rated us—for 2nd year running!—as one of America's Best Midsize Employers after having also honored us as one of the nation's Best Employers for Veterans in 2022.

To help chart a new course for our agency, in FY 2022 we released an ambitious five-year strategic plan covering fiscal years 2023 through 2027, and we also updated our vision and mission statements to better reflect GPO's role in our digital present.

Today, GPO's vision is that of an *America Informed*, and we aim to achieve our mission of publishing trusted information for the Federal Government to the American people guided by four key values—honesty, kindness, effectiveness, and inclusiveness.

Our FY 2023-2027 Strategic Plan is built around four strategic imperatives to: (1) Achieve Operational Excellence; (2) Modernize and Innovate; (3) Ensure Financial Stability; and (4) Develop the Workforce. (A copy of the plan can be found here: https://www.gpo.gov/docs/default-source/mission-vision-and-goals-pdfs/gpo_strategicplan_fy23-27.pdf)

We made significant progress on a number of initiatives consistent with these goals in FY 2022, including a report from the Task Force on a Digital Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), established at the beginning of 2022. Focused on the questions of whether and how the FDLP should evolve, this task force drew from our incredible FDLP partners and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive set of policy recommendations. I recently conveyed to Congress a set of legislative proposals consistent with the Task Force's recommendations that, if enacted, will permit us to transition to a more digital FDLP. We have also started the work of implementing those recommendations that do not require changes in law.

During FY 2022, GPO also successfully completed the transition from the production of the ePassport for the State Department to the Next Generation Passport Program. Over a decade in development and launch, this transition reaffirmed the United States' position as the global leader in the most innovative and secure international travel credentials and concluded production of the ePassport after a production run of more than 220 million units between 2007 and 2022.

GPO's single biggest challenge is maintaining a workforce prepared to carry on its work well into the future. Fifty percent of our workforce is eligible to retire in the next four years. That's one out of every two proofreaders, presspeople, bookbinders, carpenters, electricians, IT specialists, contracting officers, and a host of other trades and professions working at GPO.

To ensure that GPO continues to attract and retain an exceptional workforce in the years ahead, we established the Recent Graduates Program and restarted our Apprenticeship Program in FY 2022. Designed to appeal to talented young graduates who are seeking a career and not merely a job, the Recent Graduates Program consisted of 22 new hires in its first year. The Apprenticeship Program, which was created to help promising GPO teammates acquire the skills needed to assume larger roles throughout the Agency welcomed its first eight participants and aims for 20 more in FY 2023.

**Prepared Statement Before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, on U.S. GPO's FY 2024 Budget**

2

We also created a new position, Production Technician, through which the Agency provides promising individuals with three years of on-the-job training to earn certification as fully credentialed bookbinders. We were able to hire 38 Production Technicians in Washington and Stennis, MS in fiscal year 2022 and are currently working to bring on an additional 18 individuals.

We also readied ourselves to execute the requirements of the Congressionally Mandated Reports Act, signed into law in December. That legislation calls upon GPO to build a portal to make congressionally mandated reports publicly available. We are working diligently on that front now and expect a great deal of collaboration with our legislative data partners in the months ahead as we work to fulfill the law's requirements.

## A Snapshot of GPO's Business

GPO has three primary lines of business: (1) producing items requested by our customers, either ourselves or through contracts with other firms across the country; (2) making government information available through libraries, the internet, and direct distribution; and (3) building the tools that our customers use to produce their own content in formats that facilitate digital and physical distribution.

### Production

GPO's business portfolio consists of—

- our in-house production work for Congress and the Executive Branch.

- the passports and secure credentials we produce for the State Department and other Federal agencies; and

- the print procurement and ancillary business services we provide to a broad range of Federal agencies.

For Congress, work we complete in-house includes the Congressional Record, the House and Senate calendars, bills, resolutions, and committee reports and hearings, and the United States Code. For the executive branch, we produce the Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations, the President's Budget, the Economic Report of the President, and many other high-profile publications. Notably, daily production of the Congressional Record and the Federal Register is like producing two major city newspapers every day.

Additionally, our craftspeople frequently produce a wide array of programs, invitations, and ceremonial and commemorative documents for both the executive and legislative branches.

**Prepared Statement Before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, on U.S. GPO's FY 2024 Budget**

3

## Making Government Information Available to the Public

Still another core enterprise of GPO is administering the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), through which GPO provides important public documents to the over 1,100 FDLP-affiliated libraries nationwide, many of which are then also made available to the general public at no charge through our ISO-certified secure digital repository, GovInfo. gov. Through the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP), the public can identify and access over 1 million current and historic government titles and resources housed in FDLP libraries throughout the country or linked to in digital collections at libraries and Federal agencies.

GPO's Superintendent of Documents and Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) units support the FDLP libraries in the identification and access to new government content, maintenance of their tangible collections, digitization of aging and rare tangible documents, and education, outreach and training to ensure that the staff of FDLP libraries can assist their patrons in finding government information in both tangible and digital collections. Additionally, LSCM distributes new tangible publications to the FDLP libraries.

The Superintendent of Documents also supervises a sales and distribution program offering current, high-interest Federal publications to the public. They also provide logistics and warehousing services for Federal customers distributing printed materials.

## Building the Tools to Deliver on the Vision of an America Informed

As technology evolved, GPO updated its operations to keep pace. With the development of GPO's proprietary MicroComp composition engine in the 1980s, GPO got into the business of building tools that would later be incorporated into our customers' workflows. Soon after adoption by GPO, Congress incorporated MicroComp into its own workflows in the House and Senate offices of Legislative Counsel as well as the legislative operations teams of the Clerk of the House and Secretary of the Senate. While MicroComp is still in use today, GPO is hard at work on its replacement, XPub, which will leverage a number of commercial and open-source technologies to produce a composition system worthy of the 21st century.

GPO also works closely with the Clerk of the House, the Secretary of the Senate, the Library of Congress, and the Congressional Data Task Force to develop and enhance United States Legislative Markup (USLM), an XML standard in the Legislative Branch and a critical data format for XPub.

GPO's ISO-certified secure digital repository, GovInfo, is also a key technology for supporting our customers. The data in GovInfo supports many public and private sector databases, such as Congress.gov, through open application programming interfaces (APIs). In FY 2022, there were 72 million average monthly information retrievals from GovInfo's collection of more than 2.3 million content packages.

Prepared Statement Before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, on U.S. GPO's FY 2024 Budget

4

## Breaking Down GPO's Revenue

In fiscal year 2022, GPO's overall revenues totaled $1.06 billion. Of that amount, $934 million—or 88 percent—came from direct billings to our non-congressional customers. This category includes current and next generation passports produced for the State Department, secure credentials produced for numerous Federal agencies, including the Capitol Police, sales and distribution of government publications, and Federal print procurement contracts managed by GPO.

Another 7 percent—or $70 million—came from billings to Congress for the provision of specific requested services, including the Congressional Record, congressional hearings, bills, resolutions, calendars, and other publications. Still another 3 percent—or $36 million—came from appropriations we used to administer the Federal Depository Library Program and provide critical public information program services. And finally, the remaining 2 percent—or $20 million—came from appropriations this Subcommittee provided to enable GPO to make critical information technology and cybersecurity investments for the future.

## Some Key Accomplishments

In fiscal year 2022 GPO charted a new course for success in this digital age and achieved some notable accomplishments:

Our GovInfo digital repository earned recertification to retain its status as the world's only ISO 16363 Trustworthy Digital Repository and won a 2022 Government Experience Award from the Center for Digital Governance.

We celebrated the 9 billionth retrieval of Government Information from Agency websites since GPO began publishing Government information in 1994, first through GPOAccess, then FDsys, and now GovInfo.

Our Customer Services business unit awarded $477 million in competitive contracts to private-sector printers nationwide supporting thousands of jobs in all 50 states.

Our Security & Intelligent Documents business unit produced a total of 18,151,000 ePassports and Next Generation Passports for the U.S. Department of State, and another 4,623,000 secure card credentials for our Federal agency customers.

We were named a "Leader in Post-Pandemic Work Policy" by Industry Today.

Graphic Design USA conveyed six 2022 awards on our Creative Services and Digital Media Team for the high quality of their productions for Federal agency customers.

We produced tickets and credentials for the Supreme Court nomination hearing of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson and had the solemn honor of creating the Lying In State Memorial Programs for Representative Don E. Young, former Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, and former Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole.

Prepared Statement Before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, on U.S. GPO's FY 2024 Budget

5

GPO earned the honor of producing the White House Holiday Greeting Card for the third consecutive year as well as producing "Holidays at the White House," a White House tour book for the very first time.

Customer Services' biennial customer survey revealed a customer satisfaction rate of 95.3 percent.

We continued to produce Annual Supplements of the United States Code via XPub, with Supplement III being completed late in FY 2022. The XPub team also produced the Final Report from the January 6th Committee and the latest report from the House Committee on Modernization.
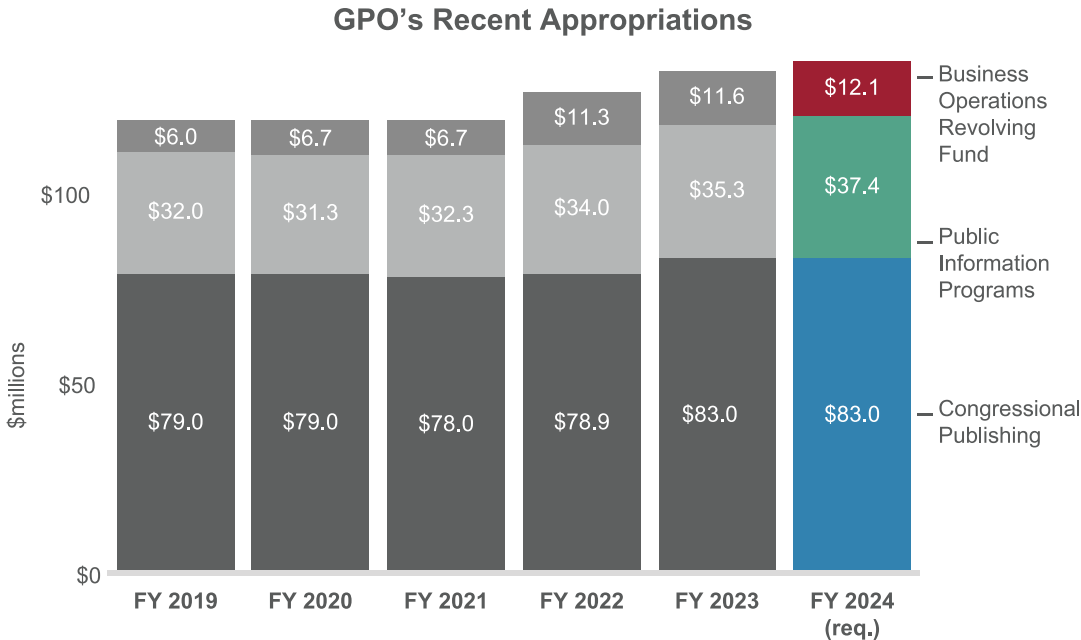
And—for the 26th consecutive year—GPO's independent outside auditor provided us with an unmodified, or clean, opinion on our annual financial statements.

## GPO's FY 2024 Appropriations Request

GPO is requesting an increase in its FY 2024 appropriations to $132,488,000, a $2,634,000 increase over our FY 2023 appropriation. This increase will account for changes in our labor and raw materials costs and also fund certain ongoing projects of importance to our congressional customers.

This would be GPO's only third proposed increase in appropriations since FY 2014 and is actually 10.2 percent less than our FY 2010 appropriation. Increased productivity through the adoption of new technologies has been key to keeping GPO's needs for appropriations down, providing new and improved services at lower costs, and reducing overall headcounts. Figure 2 shows GPO's recent appropriations amounts and requests. Currently, we have 1,583 GPO teammates, compared to 2,284 in FY 2010.

*Figure 2*

**GPO's Recent Appropriations**



| | FY 2019 | FY 2020 | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 (req.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Business Operations Revolving Fund | | | | | | $12.1 |
| Public Information Programs | $6.0 | $6.7 | $6.7 | $11.3 | $11.6 | $37.4 |
| | $32.0 | $31.3 | $32.3 | $34.0 | $35.3 | |
| Congressional Publishing | $79.0 | $79.0 | $78.0 | $78.9 | $83.0 | $83.0 |

Prepared Statement Before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, on U.S. GPO's FY 2024 Budget

6

One tool we used to keep our appropriations requests low was to repurpose prior-year unexpended balances. We appreciate the willingness of this Subcommittee and the Full Committee to allow GPO to use those balances in support of programs and capital investments that benefit the original purpose of the appropriated funds.

However, as I have informed your predecessors in recent years, those balances are declining, forcing GPO to request additional funds if we are to continue our current pace of development and innovation.

Our FY 2024 request includes $83,000,000 for congressional publishing, just $8,000 more than our FY 2023 appropriation. It is based on our estimates of Congress' likely needs, informed by historical trends, and available unexpended balances. It is also informed by increased raw materials and labor costs. In constant-dollar terms it represents a 35 percent reduction for congressional publishing appropriations since FY 2010.

Our request for our public information programs (PIP) account, through which we administer the nationwide Federal Depository Library Program, is $37,388,000. This represents an increase of $2,131,000—or 6 percent—over FY 2023, and will cover the costs of providing Federal Government publications in digital and tangible formats to 1,100 Federal depository libraries nationwide, cataloging and indexing, and distributing documents to recipients designated by law and international exchanges. Rising labor and compensation costs as well as increased materials costs are the driving factors behind this increase in our FY 2023 PIP appropriation request. Even with this proposed increase, the PIP appropriation will be 8.6 percent lower than the amount appropriated in FY 2010, or 34 percent lower in constant-dollar terms.

The final component of our overall appropriations request is for a total of $12,100,000 for GPO's revolving fund to support capital investments and information technology upgrades, which represents an increase of $495,000 over amounts appropriated in FY 2023.

This component of our request is critically important to ensuring that GPO can make the capital investments in equipment and technology needed to continue providing Congress and our Federal agency customers with the high level of service they expect.

Within this request for an increase in appropriations to our revolving fund, we have identified three specific capital investment projects that this funding would support. These items will be familiar to the Subcommittee, as they represent longstanding GPO priorities.

First, we are seeking direct appropriations support for our continued development of the XPub composition system, which is intended to fully replace our more than 30-year-old proprietary MicroComp composition system.

XPub is a transformational project for GPO. It will enable GPO and our customers to move to an all XML-composition workflow, simplifying authoring and production while also providing data in a format where it can easily be posted on the web, delivered to mobile devices, and repurposed into e-books, mobile web applications, or other forms of content delivery which contribute to openness and transparency in Government.

**Prepared Statement Before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, on U.S. GPO's FY 2024 Budget**

7

XPub is being deployed on a product-by-product basis. In FY 2019, GPO took a major step forward by publishing the 2018 Main Edition of the United States Code, a nearly 60,000-page publication, through XPub. Since then, GPO has continued to work on bringing additional publications into XPub production, with a focus on Congressional bills, resolutions, amendments, public laws, Statutes at Large, House and Senate calendars, the Congressional Record, and the Federal Register.

In FY 2022, GPO obtained the internal authority to operate for the upcoming production release of Congressional Bills and Public Laws. This release is currently in testing with our House and Senate customers and is slated to be in production with the House, Senate, and GPO Bill End during FY 2023. Features in this release include integration with House and Senate XML authoring tools for Bills, as well as a new responsive HTML format for Congressional Bills and Public Laws.

Prior to FY 2022, much of the initial development of XPub had been funded through the annual reprogramming of unexpended appropriations with the Subcommittee's support, but given GPO's mostly static appropriations requests in recent years, those prior-year funds have been largely expended. In recognition of the importance of the XPub project, the Subcommittee generously provided direct appropriations of $3,370,000 in FY 2022 and $5,630,000 in FY 2023.

If approved, our $6,575,000 appropriation request will keep XPub development and deployment on track in FY 2024. Once development is complete, we hope to provide XPub to our customers as a software-as-a-service (SAAS) application, ensuring that there is a dedicated stream of income to support continued development of the platform without the need for separate recurring appropriations.

The second component of GPO's request for increased capital investment appropriations in FY 2024 relates to the continued development of our peerless GovInfo online portal, the world's only ISO-certified trusted digital repository. In recent years, the Subcommittee directly appropriated funds to refresh GovInfo's infrastructure and further develop its content collections. This year's request of $5,375,000 for GovInfo is $500,000 less than the amount the Subcommittee provided in FY 2023, and it would be divided between infrastructure investments ($1,875,000) and development investments ($3,500,000), including development required to support the digitization of historical content.

Investments in GovInfo support the distribution of much of the legislative data that supports the Library of Congress' Congress.gov site as well as the bulk data made available for other public uses. In addition, GovInfo helps keep the costs of administering the Federal Depository Library Program down by making hundreds of thousands of critical Government publications available online free of charge, obviating the need to print and distribute thousands of volumes annually. GovInfo is the cornerstone of the Task Force's recommendation to move to a mostly digital FDLP program in the future.

With the Subcommittee's sustained support, GPO has been able to add hundreds of thousands of additional documents and publications to the GovInfo online repository each year—over 152,000 content packages were added in FY 2022—and the public's usage of GovInfo continues to grow, with more than 868 million retrievals from GovInfo in FY 2022.

Prepared Statement Before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, on U.S. GPO's FY 2024 Budget

8

GPO successfully completed its recertification to retain ISO certification as the world's only ISO-certified trusted digital repository. With this designation, end users can be comfortable knowing that information accessed via GovInfo is both safely secured and authentic, two invaluable attributes for government information.

The third component of GPO's request for increased appropriations for its business operations revolving fund account is for $150,000 to support GPO's broad and ongoing efforts to defend against advanced persistent attacks (APTs) to its information technology systems. In recent years, the Subcommittee has generously provided direct appropriations for these types of investments and this year GPO is again requesting support. As you know, cyberattacks on our critical infrastructure continue to mount from foreign and domestic sources.

GPO has several million dollars in ongoing APT investments currently underway to reduce the risk of unauthorized access, data exfiltration, and changes to data, and this request would help support those efforts.

Lastly, before I conclude, I want to add that, as required by section 1604(c) of the Legislative Branch Inspectors General Independence Act, we have forwarded our Inspector General's request for $7,243,000 in budget authority for FY 2024 as part of our FY 2024 Budget Submission. Currently that request is funded as part of GPO's agency overhead — a component of the prices and rates GPO charges its agency customers and Congress — and not as a separate appropriation.

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to present GPO's FY 2024 appropriations request, and for all the support you and your staff have extended to us during these challenging past two years. This completes my prepared statement, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

**Prepared Statement Before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, on U.S. GPO's FY 2024 Budget**

9